

VZCZCXRO0577
PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ
RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHAH #0286/01 0600537
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 290537Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0345
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0252
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 3436
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1254
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 0060
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0022
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1121
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1690
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000286

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EUR/RUS, EAP/K, EEB
PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN
ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON
COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [EPET](#) [TX](#)
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MINISTER OF OIL AND GAS
ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMES USTDA PROGRAMS

[11](#). (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

[12](#). (SBU) SUMMARY: During a meeting with U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) Regional Director Dan Stein, Minister of Oil and Gas Baymurad Hojamuhamedov enthusiastically welcomed possible USTDA assistance. He expressed particular interest in U.S. government and/or commercial assistance in developing an oil and gas training center and welcomed a possible USTDA grant to help develop Turkmenistan's "weak" petrochemical sector. A USTDA contractor will visit in the next two weeks to further explore the possibilities for USTDA involvement, but the initial prospects look excellent. END SUMMARY.

[13](#). (SBU) During a February 28 meeting with USTDA Regional Director for Europe and Eurasia Dan Stein, Oil and Gas Minister Hojamuhamedov enthusiastically welcomed the possibility of cooperation with USTDA. Hojamuhamedov reported that his ministry has signed bilateral memoranda of understanding with the United Kingdom's Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Trade and Commerce in South Korea. The ministry also signed agreements with some Indian companies, including with the Gas Authority of India, Limited (GAIL). Within the scope of these agreements, the Minister visited South Korea, where he made a presentation on Turkmenistan's oil and gas prospects, and South Korean companies have been visiting Turkmenistan frequently over the last two to three months. The Ministry also agreed with a recent German trade delegation to form working groups/task forces to discuss development of Turkmenistan's chemical sector. However, Hojamuhamedov added, he would also like to see U.S. companies more engaged in Turkmenistan.

14. (SBU) Noting that oil and gas sector training had been phased out during the "transition time," Hojamuhamedov said that his Ministry is now working to establish a training center with the most advanced equipment. For that purpose, his staff went to India, where they talked with oil and gas companies, including GAIL. On March 3, some of his staff will travel to Russia, where they will look at Gazprom's and Transneft's training facilities and curriculum. However, he added, he would be very interested if USTDA could identify or organize a visit to a U.S. oil and gas training center -- one with a particularly well-developed curriculum -- or help to arrange for center personnel to visit Turkmenistan. Such travel, though, would need to take place very soon.

15. (SBU) Hojamuhamedov said that the Ministry's training center will be broadly focused in all areas -- the upstream, mid-stream and downstream, as well as oil processing. Training would be for mid-level staff and managers. The Cabinet of Ministers has already approved the general idea, and Hojamuhamedov suggested that getting a budget will not be a problem. However, equipment and technical assistance from companies would also be welcome.

16. (SBU) Stating that Turkmenistan's petrochemical sector had been largely neglected in recent years, Hojamuhamedov said that human capacity in that sector was weak. Turkmenistan needs to find U.S. companies that want to become involved, and is willing to consider joint ventures. "This is what we say to everybody, and it is up to the companies to decide what they want." Noting that his Ministry is planning to convert the Seydi refinery (located in northeastern Turkmenistan, not far from Turkmenabat) into a petrochemical facility, he said that they will announce an international tender in the first week of March to design a new plant. The

ASHGABAT 00000286 002 OF 002

tender will be announced on the Ministry's website, www.oilgas.gov.tm. Hojamuhamedov welcomed a possible USTDA grant in the petrochemical sector, as well.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: Hojamuhamedov is very familiar with USTDA programs as a result of the USTDA-sponsored visit by hydrocarbon officials to the United States last fall and an ongoing USTDA training program being held at the Hydrocarbon State Agency, the first phase of which will end February 29, and it was very clear that he appreciates the expertise that USTDA can bring to the equation. A USTDA contractor will visit in the next two weeks to further explore the possibilities for USTDA involvement, but the initial prospects, at least, look excellent. END COMMENT.

18. (U) USTDA Dan Stein cleared this cable.
HOAGLAND